

CHRIST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, Dec. 24,
1971

The Organ Prelude

*The Hymn 112

*The Invocation (responsively)

Min. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou who leadest Joseph like a flock! Thou who art enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth!

Pep. Stir up Thy might, and come to save us! Restore us, O God; let Thy face shine,

that we may be saved!

Min. Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and His arm rules for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him, and His recompense before

Him.

Pep. He will feed His flock like a shepherd, He will gather the lambs in His arms. He will carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those

that are with young.

All O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For He is our God, and we are the people of His

pasture, and the sheep of His hand.

*The Gloria Patri

The Advent Wreath Lighting

The Scripture: Ezekiel 34:11-16

John 10:7-16

The Hymn

118 - 1 & 6

The Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

Luke 2:8-10

The Hymn

102 - 1 & 3

The Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

Isaiah 9:6-7

Luke 2:10-12

The Hymn

107 - 1 & 4

The Offering

The Offering Prayer

The Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

Luke 2:13-20

*The Hymn 105
The Christmas Monologue - "Sam's Song"
The Candlelighting Ceremony

*The Christmas Collect (all)

O God, You have made this most holy night to shine with the brightness of Jesus the true Light. Grant that, having known on earth the mysteries of that Light, we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven where He lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. Amen.

*The Hymn 101

Extinguish Candles

*The Hymn

*The Benediction

*The Threefold Amen

*The Postlude

*Congregation Stands

Call to Worship: Glory to God in the highest
and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Call to Confession: God sent his Son into the
world, not to condemn the world, but that
through him the world might be saved. Let us
call upon him in confession.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Assurance of Pardon: God so loved the world
that he gave his only begotten Son, that who
soever believes in Him should not perish but
have everlasting life. To those who come to
him in humble confession he will in no wise
cast out. Amen.



TRINITY CHARGE--THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Ralph C. Link, Pastor
Trinity Church, New Bloomfield 9:00 A.M.
Christ Church, Duncannon 10:30 A.M.

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP December 26, 1971

The Organ Prelude
*The Hymn of Praise 106
*The Call to Worship
*The Prayer of Confession (Unison)
Almighty and Eternal God, who didst create light and life, even as we come into thy presence we would hide ourselves from thee in shame. Our thoughts, words, and deeds are dark shadows upon us. Like the men of old, we have strayed from thy ways, losing sight of thy light. Thou who came as light into our dark world, we have failed in times past to perceive thee; so even now we fail in our perception of thy marvelous gift of light. Remove from us the shadows that we might stand in the radiance of him who is the light of the world; even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
*The Kyrie
*The Assurance of Pardon
The Scripture----Luke 2:1-20
*The Gloria Patri
The Anthem (Trinity)
The Pastoral Prayer
The Choral Response (Trinity)
The Announcements
The Receiving of Tithes and Offerings
*The Doxology
*The Offering Prayer and Lord's Prayer
The Hymn of Meditation 109
The Sermon----"What's New?"
The Sermon Prayer
*The Hymn of Response 113
*The Benediction

*The Threefold Amen
*The Postlude

*Congregation Stands

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Sunday Jan. 9th we will celebrate the Lord's Supper to begin the New Year. We will also receive into membership anyone desiring to unite with us.

The joint consistory meeting will be held Tues. Jan. 18th at 7:30 pm in Trinity Church, New Bloomfield.

TRINITY CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Consistory meeting Tues. Jan. 4th at 7:30 pm to conduct the regular business and to reorganize. *BEST WISHES AT HOME*

CHRIST CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The regular monthly consistory meeting will be held on Jan. 3rd at 7:30 pm.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Steele want to thank all those who sent cards for their 50th wedding anniversary.

XXXXXYESXXXXXXXNEWSXXXX

ADVENT

Luke

"What's New?"

Text: Luke 2:10b "Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy." ~~Jerusalem~~ Jerusalem Bible.

Several million people during World War II, ~~each evening~~ would pause each day in the early evening to listen to a news broadcast. The familiar and awaited voice would come on the air and the man would state, "Ah yes, there is good news tonight." The man was Gabriel Heatter, and in a world filled with fear and frustration, a world filled with death and destruction, a world filled with despair and dismay, the words good news, had a calming and soothing effect. Many of those who listened were mothers of sons fighting in many parts of the world. Many ~~wif~~ were wives and sweethearts who dreaded the thought that their family would be broken up by the death of that husband or sweetheart. To each of them in their own way they listened for that ray of hope that indeed there was good news.

In Palestine during the reign of Caesar Augustus the Jews were living in very black and bleak times. Their nation was overrun by the Romans and they were at their mercy. Not only this but the trivial little mercenaries hired by the Romans in each precinct were cheating and stealing from their fellow Jews. Perhaps if one of them would have been asked his feelings his reply would have been that there is no hope. They had to pay a great deal in the way of taxes, and they had to tolerate their own countrymen aiding the Roman cause.

To the Orthodox Jew it was only a matter of time until God intervened in history again. He was going to send a deliverer such as Moses, and David. A man who would lead them out this bondage and overthrow all of this evil, much as they were delivered from the Egyptians. This leader was to be the promised one of God. The Messiah.

But alas no Messiah was forthcoming in Israel. Each year

dragged on as the one previous to it. Somehow each year seemed to get worse and each year drove the people deeper into despair. Who could really blame them for taking the birth of a baby in stride. It was merely another mouth to be fed in their already overcrowded land. Birth and death were so common, that few people paid much attention to it, unless they were directly involved.

The census called for by Caesar Augustus was responsible for the huge crowd in Bethlehem and the sight of a very common man along with a very common wife who was obviously very pregnant did not cause a stir or draw too much attention from anyone. Mary and Joseph arrived at the Inn and were not admitted. They were not being discriminated against, nor were they being shunned because no one wanted them. They had merely arrived a little too late to get lodgings. The Inn was full and had Joseph complained to anyone, I am sure the reply would have been, That's tough fella, you should have gotten here earlier. I feel for you but I can't reach you."

So Joseph and Mary went quietly and unobserved to the stable in back of the Inn. In this humble setting their baby was born. It wasn't until the messengers of God went to work that this birth took on any significance. But even then it didn't mean too much to too many, for after all the Messiah was to come in the form of a man and not as a child. After all, what could he do or accomplish? So this birth was accepted as another unfortunate birth and the family and child were mostly rejected.

The events surrounding this birth give us some thoughts for reflection. There are some things that should strike us as being all too familiar. The incident involving the Inn has been told and retold many times. The innkeeper has come into an awful lot of abuse down through the years. He has been accused by many preachers as the man who rejected Christ. But actually if we look at his side we can see

that he was a victim of circumstances. He had to take care of the customers on hand. He was concerned with the duties of being a good host to those who were signed up to stay there that night. Many have attacked him for his lack of hospitality, but have you ever heard the patrons of the Inn attacked for their lack of compassion and concern for an obviously pregnant woman? One would think that among all of them, someone would have offered to share their room or to double up to make room.

One day while she was walking with some children, Queen Mary was caught in a sudden shower. She took shelter on the porch of a nearby home and rang the doorbell. When the woman answered she asked for an umbrella. She did not identify herself as the queen, but tried to hide her identity by pulling her hat down over her face as much as she could. The clothing she was wearing was rather plain too because she did not wish to be recognized. The woman was hesitant to loan an umbrella to a stranger and particularly a good one. The queen had told her, "I'll send it back tomorrow," but the woman went to the attic and returned with an old umbrella, which was torn and ragged. One rib was broken and there was a hole in it.

The next day a man with gold braid on his uniform and an envelope called on this woman. "The queen sent me with this letter," he said, "and also asked me to thank you for the loan of your umbrella." The woman was stunned and burst into tears. "Oh what an opportunity I missed that I did not give her my very best," she cried.

The Innkeeper and the patrons of the Inn perhaps would have said the same thing had they realized who it was that was born in that stable, because of their concern for themselves. There is a lot of the innkeeper, and a lot of the spirit of the patrons of the Inn in each of us. We only have so much room in us and our desires and our wishes and wants come first. Get to the end of the line Lord Jesus, your turn will come when we get around to you.

One of the sad commentaries of life is the fact that hindsight is better than foresight. After an event is over and done with, we can always look back and say, "If I had done this instead of what I did, things would have worked out better." Or, "perhaps I would have acted differently had I known this would have happened."

Had the innkeeper known the Messiah was among them, he would have found room. Had the patrons known who Mary was carrying, they would have doubled up gladly. But you see they as well as we, only see our selfish whims that need to be taken care of. It is always our way that needs to be had, and in so many of the Inns of our lives there is no room for Jesus.

But with all of this and through all of these circumstances of the selfishness of man then and now, runs the thought and the reality that, "There is good news of a great Joy." The JOY of God coming to man. God meeting man more than halfway. God coming into his very existence. This is the good news that filled Bethlehem that very night. This is the ~~newest~~ good news that we have today, tonight and forever, that God came to earth in the form of a man and through the life and love of that man, we can live forever with our God.

What other good news is there possible, that can surmount this news? Can earthly goods, or wealth, or fame and fortune, or anything else surpass this good news? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us," as the Apostle Paul so aptly states.

The story is told of a young Christian girl who was visiting a friend and former associate of her father. The elderly man ~~asked~~ had sought the wealth and acclaim of the world and had done very well in getting both. The young ladys father was in financial difficulty as well as failing health. He asked the girl about her father and listened very carefully as she told of her father's patience in his trials and the cheerfulness with which he could face life or death. As she

finished telling him about her father, the man who was deeply troubled by the vast difference between their lives exclaimed, "You probably wonder why I cannot be as happy and serene as your father is, but think of the difference. He is going to his treasure, and I -- I MUST LEAVE ~~MY~~ ^{MY} MINE."

Ah yes, there's good news today, tongiht and forever. The news of great joy. Jesus Christ is born and he is waiting for each of us to make room in our hearts and lives for him. Will we turn him away because there is no room, or will we say as the hymn writer, "Come into my heart Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for thee."